

Transcript #1 - Brief Outline Response
Transcript #2 - Detailed Response

Project I.D. No. 96

NAME: Oka, Toyokichi DATE OF BIRTH: 4/26/1894 PLACE OF BIRTH: Wakayama
Age: 80 Sex: M Marital Status: M Education: 8 yrs & Private school to learn English.

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1910 Age: 16 M.S.Y.Y. Port of entry: Seattle, Wa
Occupation/s: 1. Student/School Boy 2. Farmer 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. Florin, Ca. (2 yrs) 2. Vacaville, Ca. (4 yrs) 3. Florin, Ca. (4-5 yrs)
Religious affiliation: Christian Church
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: Santa Anita Assembly Center
Name of relocation center: Heart Mountain, Wyoming
Dispensation of property: Church Basement Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. Janitor 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: Railroad Worker (In Montana)
Left camp to go to: Chicago, Illinois (In 1943), then to Montana

POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: September 1945
Address/es: 1. Montana 2. San Jose, California
3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian Church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe Date: 12/11/74 Place: San Jose, Ca.

Translator Toyoko Hernandez

Manuscript #1: Chief
Int. Sec. / 20000000

NAME: Mr. Toyokichi Oka
AGE: 80 years old
DATE OF BIRTH: April 26, 1894
PLACE OF BIRTH: Wakayama Ken

YEAR OF ENTRY INTO THE USA: 1910
MAJOR OCCUPATION: Farmer
CAMP: Hartmountain

DATE OF INTERVIEW: Dec. 11, 1974
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: San Jose
INTERVIEWER: Heihachiro Takarabe
TRANSLATOR: Tayeko Hernandez

Q: Please tell me your name.

A: My name is Toyokichi Oka.

Q: Where were you born?

A: In Wakayama City.

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born on April 26, 1894 (Meiji 27).

Q: What was your father doing?

A: In Japan he was a farmer, and in America he was growing strawberries and grapes in Florin.

Q: When did your father come to America?

A: He came to America in 1900 (Meiji 33).

Q: How old were you then?

A: I was 16 years old.

Q: Did you come here with your father?

A: No, I didn't. I came here in 1910.

Q: So your father came here alone.

A: Yes, he did. And " " came here alone, too, called by him.

Q: Then, you had been brought up by your mother until you were 16 years old.

A: Yes.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: I had one brother and two sisters. My older brother, who had been in Los Angeles, died this year.

Q: Is that right. When you were in Japan, were your grandparents living?

A: Yes, they were.

Q: Was your mother working?

A: Yes, she was working on the farm which belonged to our family.

Q: What was the religion of your parents?

A: It was Tenri-Kyo.

Q: Tenri-Kyo? Oh, that's rare, isn't it? Were your grandparents living with you together in your house?

A: No, they were not. They were living near my house, though.

Q: Who was the educator of you when you were young?

A: It was my mother.

Q: Did you learn a lot of things from your mother?
A: Yes, I did.

Q: What do you remember?
A: Being a Tenri-Kyo believer, every morning and evening she went outside, looked up to the heaven and prayed to the God of Heaven, "May the children grow up upright and honest. May my husband in America live safe without an accident." This is what I can't forget. She prayed loud. And this is one of the reasons why I became a Christian. She let me know that God exists.

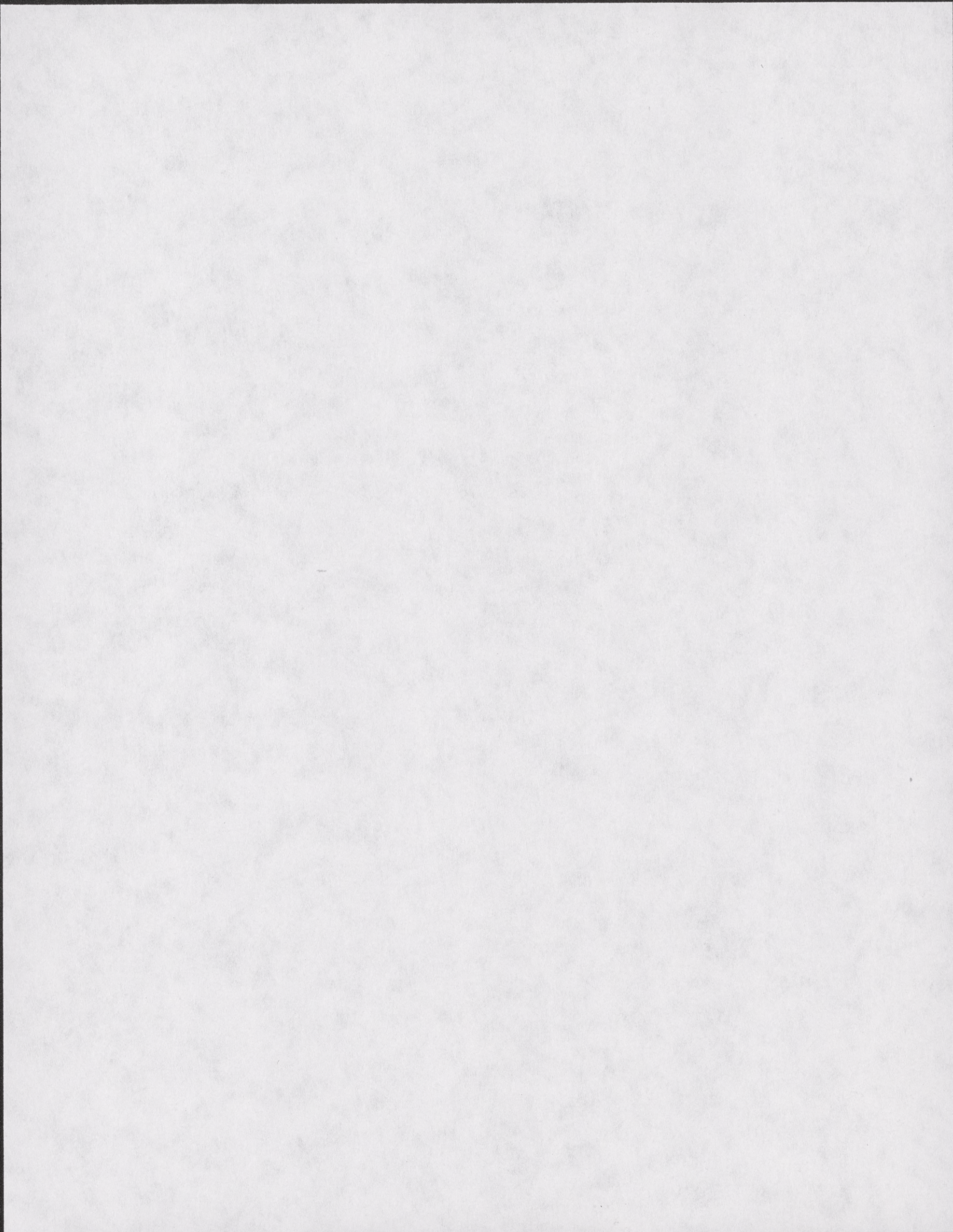
Q: Do you remember any happy events happened to you when you were young?
A: A happy memory was that I used to swim all day long when it was summer or a warm day since I liked swimming very much.

Q: How about going fishing?
A: I didn't go fishing. I played tennis, too, and I was a champion. Swimming and tennis were my sports.

Q: Do you have any sad memory? or was there any experience that you got in trouble?
A: Being in trouble? I didn't experience any particular trouble as such.

Q: Have you felt lonesome?
A: I had an elder brother with whom I used to play together. He had left for America three years before I did, so I felt lonesome then having lost a playmate since the rest were two sisters. I was rather a quiet child, therefore I didn't have so many friends to play with, of course I had some good friends.

Q: What did you do when you played with friends?
A: We did swimming or played tennis since we were 13 years old or so, but before that, when I was really young, I don't remember what I used to play. I have attended a swimming school for 8 years. There was the swimming school at the Kino Kawa River w-ich was close to my house. In the summer time, this school used to have about 1,000 students. I learned various techniques of swimming there, and used to play by myself or with my friends in the water like a Kappa (a water imp.)



*Transcript #2 Detailed
responses*

NAME: Mr. Toyokichi Oka
AGE: 80 years old
DATE OF BIRTH: April 26, 1894
PLACE OF BIRTH: Wakayama Ken

YEAR OF ENTRY INTO THE USA: 1910
MAJOR OCCUPATION: Farmer
CAMP: Hartmountain

DATE OF INTERVIEW: Dec. 11, 1974
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: San Jose
INTERVIEWER: Heihachiro Takarabe
TRANSLATOR: Tayeko Hernandez

Q: Please tell me your name.

A: My name is Toyokichi Oka.

Q: Where were you born?

A: In Wakayama City.

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born on April 26, 1894 (Meiji 27).

Q: What was your father doing?

A: In Japan he was a farmer, and in America he was growing strawberries and grapes in Florin.

Q: When did your father come to America?

A: He came to America in 1900 (Meiji 33).

Q: How old were you then?

A: I was 16 years old.

Q: Did you come here with your father?

A: No, I didn't. I came here in 1910.

Q: So your father came here alone.

A: Yes, he did. And " came here alone, too, called by him.

Q: Then, you had been brought up by your mother until you were 16 years old.

A: Yes.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: I had one brother and two sisters. My older brother, who had been in Los Angeles, died this year.

Q: Is that right. When you were in Japan, were your grandparents living?

A: Yes, they were.

Q: Was your mother working?

A: Yes, she was working on the farm which belonged to our family.

Q: What was the religion of your parents?

A: It was Tenri-Kyo.

Q: Tenri-Kyo? Oh, that's rare, isn't it? Were your grandparents living with you together in your house?

A: No, they were not. They were living near my house, though.

Q: Who was the educator of you when you were young?

A: It was my mother.

Q: Did you learn a lot of things from your mother?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: What do you remember?

A: Being a Tenri-Kyo believer, every morning and evening she went outside, looked up to the heaven and prayed to the God of Heaven, "May the children grow up upright and honest. May my husband in America live safe without an accident." This is what I can't forget. She prayed loud. And this is one of the reasons why I became a Christian. She let me know that God exists.

Q: Do you remember any happy events happened to you when you were young?

A: A happy memory was that I used to swim all day long when it was summer or a warm day since I liked swimming very much.

Q: How about going fishing?

A: I didn't go fishing. I played tennis, too, and I was a champion. Swimming and tennis were my sports.

Q: Do you have any sad memory? or was there any experience that you got in trouble?

A: Being in trouble? I didn't experience any particular trouble as such.

Q: Have you felt lonesome?

A: I had an elder brother with whom I used to play together. He had left for America three years before I did, so I felt lonesome then having lost a playmate since the rest were two sisters. I was rather a quiet child, therefore I didn't have so many friends to play with, of course I had some good friends.

Q: What did you do when you played with friends?

A: We did swimming or played tennis since we were 13 years old or so, but before that, when I was really young, I don't remember what I used to play. I have attended a swimming school for 8 years. There was the swimming school at the Kino Kawa River which was close to my house. In the summer time, this school used to have about 1,000 students. I learned various techniques of swimming there, and used to play by myself or with my friends in the water like a Kappa (a water imp.)

Q: How far did you go to school?

A: In Japan? I went to school for 8 years in Japan. In our days, they were called Jinjoh 4 years school and Kotoh 4 year school (an advanced school). Before coming to America, I had been attending a private school of the English language. I came to America when I was almost 17 years old -- I was in the end of 16-year-old in Kazoye Doshi (a Japanese way of counting one's age which comes to one years more than the Western way-- That is, Mr. Oka was almost 16 years old when he came to America.)

Q: In Kazoye Doshi?

A: Yes, therefore I was actually becoming 16 years old.

Q: Do you remember about the teachers of the schools?

A: There was one thing that I can't forget -- which a history teacher said. He had returned from America, and was a Christian, though I hadn't known it then. He was 23 years old then. He said, "Japanese ancestors came from Judea." "Amaterasu Ohmikami who came before Jimmu Tennoh Emperor (the first Emperor of Japan) came from Judea and the words such as "Yakkorasa" are from Judea." "The Japanese clothes also came from Judea. Our long Kimono and Obi, too." I think it was quite a bold thing for those days.

Q: Was he a Japanese history teacher?

A: Yes, he was. He said, "Amaterasu Ohmikami came to Japan from Judea. He flew over Okinawa so the natives in Japan interpreted him as a wing from the heaven. So did the Jimmu Tennoh Emperor." "The elder brother of Jimmu Tennoh Emperor passed away, and was enshrined in the Kampei Taisha Shrine in Japan. There are 7 Kampei Taisha Shrines in Japan. He conquered the natives called Kumaso who were doing bad things. Thus the Japanese people have a strain of Judea's blood in their veins." He said, "Of course there are so many bloods mixed in us, but the origin was Judea's blood." It was quite a bold speech for the time, so I can't forget it.

Q: Was it a town or a village where you grew up?

A: It was a village in the suburbs of the city. There was a river named Kino Kawa, and my village was just next to a bridge of the river. It is now a Cho (a town), and called Kitajima-Cho of Wakayama City.

Q: Do you remember anything happened in the village?

A: I don't remember any particular happening in the village.

Q: Do you remember about a war?

A: About the World War I? Yes, I do. It was very impressive to me. At that time, I was in Vacaville. Everybody broke down from the flu one after another, and they were short of helpers. I was selected by the Mii Kyokai (Methodist Church) in Vacaville to go to help the sick people. First they had been put in a big tent, but it became so cold that a church of white people was selected to be a temporary hospital. And I went to this hospital to help them. But I caught the flu having a temperature of 105° F, and was hospitalized there, where I realized for the first time in my life how the hell looked like. It was a horrible place with people crying and shouting. By then I had already had a belief in Christianity. I opened the Bible and stayed calm unable to fall asleep with the fever of 105° F and the people's noises. This was the time when I faced my death. Already 15 people had passed away, and the people at the church were saying that I would be the 16th to die. I had a very painful time then, but I didn't cry or shout and stayed calm. So a nurse said, "This person has a Holy Spirit over him." On November 11, the day the War ended, a bell was tolled. A nurse said to me whose temperature suddenly went down from 105°F to normal, "The fever is gone, so you can go home now. Moreover, we have no more war." I can't forget how I was happy at that time. Anyway the World War was over. Then I went to church, since I couldn't walk, I crawled. All my hair fell out of my head because of the fever I had. So you can imagine how bad I was. I think I was lucky enough to survive. Facing death, I deeply thought about the problem what I had to do if I were dying. Every detail of my past was flashed back like a movie film; what I was doing, or what I did and so on. And I was worried thinking that I had not done anything good at all although I had not done anything bad, either. I prayed, "God, please let me stay here on earth for a little longer. I, at present, am not worth coming up to your side. And I will do my best for people." The next day, suddenly, my fever was gone. I thought this was the God's deed, and I would not forget it even today.

Q: You mentioned that what you had experienced were flashed back like a film, do you remember the things flashed back?

A: They were what I gave trouble to people, what I couldn't be kind to the others, what I spoke

ill of people, and other various things of my past. The first came the deeds what I had done without faith, the second came what I had done without love, that is, although I hadn't caused trouble to people, I hadn't positively made efforts for them. I can't tell you all now, but various experiences of my past were flashed back to me. Even the things I hadn't been able to recall before came up to my memory then. That's why I think that we have to have not only faith but also love. Having faith only will not do.

Q: When you were in Japan, did the Russo-Japanese War break out?

A: Yes, I have experienced the war. When the war was over, the whole village was buzzing with the news. I was only 10 years old or so, and walked around the village carried on my mother's back with a Japanese flag. People were saying, "Japan won the war! Japan did. And Russia lost!" I don't remember about the Sino-Japanese War.

Q: Were there a lot of people killed in the war?

A: I don't remember. I think a lot of people were killed, but I was too young to remember, being 10 years old or so.

Q: Do you remember anything else about your childhood?

A: I was taken to Honzan (the Central Buddhist Temple) by my mother when I was at the age of 10 or so to listen to sermons by a priest who was from the Imperial family. This meeting was held for three days and three nights, and the place was full of people, who was saying with tears in their eyes, "Thank You! Thank You!" after the sermon. Although I didn't understand it, being too young, I thought that the sermon must have been very thankful and blessing. Then on the way back, when I was running on a bridge, I saw a lot of people who had attended the sermon meeting were drunk drinking and singing loud, forgetting the sermon. Seeing them, I thought, "Oh, religion is blessing itself. It's just like the time when you drink; you have a good time when you drink, but you have to suffer from a hangover later." And I decided then that I would never enter any, religion, however that I believed in God. "Religion has no use like liquor, and I would never believe it," I thought. Since then I had been against religion for a long time, because this bad image was implanted in my mind when I was very young. That the God exists was taught by my mother who used to pray aloud looking up at the sky.

Q: Your mother seemed to be a Shintoist. Was she a believer of Tenri-Kyo?

A: Yes, she believed Tenri-kyo, that is, Shinto.

Q: But she also attended to listen to a Buddhist sermon...

A: That's because she was invited by neighbors. People used to do this kind of thing when there was a big meeting or gathering held. In my area, Tenri-kyo was very popular, and for that reason, I guess, my mother began to believe Tenri-kyo.

Q: In spite of being so little, you were sensitive enough to find such a thing, weren't you?

A: Yes, and this impression implanted in my mind.

Q: Who taught you that you shouldn't speak ill of others?

A: My mother did. Tenri-kyo tells us these things like "you mustn't do this, or that." I still remember a phrase of it; "Ashiki o Harai, (drive away evils) Tasuke Tamaye, (and help us) Tenri-Oh no Mikoto (the God of Universe)" When I was a child, I used to change this phrase to make fun of it and say with my friends, "Yashiki o Harai, Tasuke tamaye, Tenten-Kobai no Mikoto." There was a book like this size in which words to pray were written, and I knew and could say by heart every word of the book, although I forgot everything now since I don't say them. My mother didn't have me have a meal if I didn't say them, therefore I had to remember the words by all means. Anyway, I was taught that the God exists by my mother who used to pray to the God looking up at the sky, but at the age of 12 or so when I attended the Buddhism sermon meeting, I began to think that religion was no good.

Q: Was your mother a tender person?

A: Yes, she was very tender. She always wrote to me when I came to America. I wrote her that I became a Christian, then she answered, "That's a very good thing for you. It is like dust in the air in a room, you can't see it without sun light, but you see it in the bright sun light. Every man has sins, and you have also been committing sins. Although it seems that there is no sin in you, but every man has sins." She wrote to me all the time. Thus I was able to turn down the various temptations I met, being young, because I also knew that the God exists. But it took long to become a Christian.

Q: Was the motive of your coming to America that your father was here?

A: It's really funny. I had been reading a monthly magazine for boys named "Nippon Shonen" (Japanese Boys) and one day I read an article in the magazine that Mr. Furukawa, the king of copper mines, (a successful businessman of copper mines) got an insurance of 100,000 yen for his dog. This 100,000 yen at that time in 1910, about 64 years ago, was quite an amount. It was worth 50,000 dollars then. "50,000 dollars' insurance for a dog! But I am a human being. It's not impossible, then, to get an insurance of that amount for a human being! me," I felt, being very sensitive then, "All right, I'm going to America..."

My uncle was doing a trade business in Yokohama, but he didn't have a child. And I was going to be adopted as his son, and had started going to a commercial school for one month. But I thought, "In stead of staying in Japan, I would rather like to go to America to learn enough money to get a 100,000 yen insurance for me." This was the motive of my coming to America. Also the history teacher taught us good things about America. So I wanted to come to America, and asked my father to send me over there.

Q: At that time, your elder brother was already in America?

A: Yes, he had left for America 2 years before I did. And it was also a motive that my brother was in America. I also heard a news of the Titanic, a wtecked boat, when I was wondering what to do, and thought that America was a great country.

Q: So you got a visa and a passport, didn't you?

A: Yes, I got them through Yobiyose.

Q: Where did you get on a boat?

A: I got on it from Kobe, got off the boat at Tacoma, Washington, got on another boat and came to San Francisco, since my father was on Florin in Sacramento. When I was on the boat, an accident just like the Titanic happened; the boat I was on and another one collided each other. It was so foggy on the sea that the boat was whistling warnings all the time, in vain. I fell down at the moment of the collision. I went up to the deck, and saw our boat collided against the side of another boat, which was gradually sinking. A bridge was at once thrown across the two boat and the passengers of the other boat crossed it to move to our boat.

Everybody remained calm, singing a hymn. Women and children crossed the bridge first, then men, and the last was the captain, who moved to our boat by a small boat after seeing his boat sunk completely with his own eyes. In this moment, I thought of the Titanic and felt that America was surely a great country. This experience was one of the motives of my becoming a Christian. Before, I had been keeping religions away, thinking that, "Being a model youth, I don't need a religion," because I was really a model youth recognized by everybody. As you can guess, a youth who is recognized a model tends to think that he is perfect enough and that he doesn't need anything any more, and he tends to be stubborn. But under such a circumstance, seeing the people, I was implanted the impression in my mind; without faith, they couldn't behave like that. The bridge was mere a board of this width, so if you were in a flurry crossing it, you would fall down to the sea. Everybody crossed the bridge calmly singing the hymn.

Q: What kind of people were on board when you came to America?

A: There were quite a few Russian people for some reason.

Q: Were there any brides on board?

A: No, there wasn't any yet.

Q: Weren't the picture-brides coming yet at that time?

A: No, they were only the people of Yobiyose (called by parents or some relatives in America) and some people to study abroad. This was in 1910. It was around 1915 or 1916 when the picture-brides started to come. I even went to see on, hearing that a Japanese woman got here. She became a wife of a store-owner--so I went to the store to see her face.

Q: Do you have any memory when you were on the ship?

A: I don't have any particular one..., but the people on the boat were all bad sailors and they were in bed all the time. Being on a small boat, only 6,000 tons, they used to throw up when a storm came. One time the boat stopped for 3 days because of the storm. People were hardly able to eat, since the tables were turned over by the storm. I, myself, didn't eat so much then, but I was quite a good sailor. I used to go up to deck while the others could never do that, being very poor sailors. It took such a long time of 40 days to get to America, and this was

really hard for me. I got bored without a person to talk with, since everybody were seasick.

Q: When the boat got to America, did you land at Seattle?

A: Yes, I did. I have been there for one week, waiting for a boat for San Francisco.

Q: Did anybody come to meet you there?

A: No, nobody did. My father had sent a telegram to the immigration office to ask them to send me to his place. Being 16 years old, under age, I was about to be sent back to Japan, because they hadn't received anything from my father, even the telegram. There was Nihonjin-Kai, and four members of the association stood surely for me so that I could land. When I saw my father, I asked him about this. He said that he had sent a telegram but that it didn't get to the place for some reason.

Q: Were you worried?

A: Yes, I was worried so much, thinking that I didn't want to go back to Japan after all these troubles. I was the only one left on the boat, being under age of 16, while the rest of them were all adult, 40 to 50 years old. They didn't allow me to get off the boat. Quite a few ship from Japan used to come to Seattle all the time to load merchandise, and I was told to go back to Japan in three days by one of these ship. Was I worried or not! I was in a big trouble, thinking it was pity for me who came all the way to Seattle to go back to Japan.

Q: What was the impression of the city of Seattle?

A: Because of the fog, it was utter darkness even it was daytime. "Oh, what a nasty town this is!", I said to myself. It was so dark even in the daytime that you couldn't see a figure, and I thought the city awful. Then on the way to San Francisco, the boat I was on was run against by a boat because of the same dense fog. You couldn't see anything at all.

Q: It was around April or May, wasn't it?

A: Yes, it was. Therefore my first impression of this country was not so good.

Q: Was it in San Francisco where you had the first chance to see America?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: What did you think about San Francisco?

A: When it was not foggy, I thought it was a nice and bright city. It has a lot of up-hills and down-hills, hasn't it? Being fresh from the country, I felt that the town was really nice.

Q: When you saw Hakujin (white people)...

A: There was no Hakujin on the boat, and I didn't contact with them so much... But I felt that they were very friendly. They, who were even strangers to me, treated me like friends, and I was happy for that.

Q: How long have you stayed in San Francisco?

A: Well, my father came to San Francisco to meet me, since I had sent a telegram to him. And we went back to Florin (in Sacramento). Of course it was such a long time ago, people were using blúsh to make fire in Kamado (cooking stoves), making smoke all over. I thought, "How different this is from that of San Francisco!" He took me to Sacramento from San Francisco after meeting me.

Q: How did you go to Sacramento from San Francisco?

A: We went there by boat. At that time, there were not so many cars around. Therefore there was nothing but a boat to take us to Sacramento. Of course there was no plane then.

Q: Who did all these steps--from getting you off the boat fro you to go to Sacramento?

A: A Japanese person who was doing a business of boarding did for me.

Q: Could you find the boarding house easily?

A: The people of the boarding house had already been there to meet me.

Q: Oh, I see. Was it because of their business?

A: Yes, it was. They were looking for the people who wanted bording.

Q: Had you stayed in Sacramento for only a couple days or so, or you went directly to ...?

A: In Sacramento? No, we didn't stay. We just directly went back to my father's place.

Q: Did you just pass through Sacramento?

A: Yes, we did. Since Florin where we were living was close to Sacramento, I used to go to Sacramento on a wagon, which was like a truck nowadays, since my parent often went up there to do shopping.

Q: Where in Florin did your father send you?

A: He seemed to have lived in a place a few miles south from Florin for a long time. I went to a grammar school from Florin.

Q: Is that so?

A: I went up to 8th grade. I wished he could have sent me further more. One of my classmates named Takizawa entered a university in Tokyo. Since I liked studying, I took it very hard. I really wished I could have gone to school more, but I had to help my father taking care of straw-berries.

Q: How did the house of your father look like?

A: It was a camping style house. We built a cooking stove and cooked our meals with it.

Q: How did the house look like? Did it look like an ordinary one?

A: Yes, it was an ordinary country house. Of course there was no electricity nor telephone.

Q: Was your elder brother living there?

A: No, he wasn't. He was a school-boy in San Francisco when I came to America. I became a school-boy, too, when my parent went back to Japan two years later.

Q: So you have stayed in Florin for two years picking up strawberries, haven't you? Was this life what you had imagined in Japan?

A: I thought this was such a inconvenient way of life even in America. The place where I lived in Florin was a kind of Japanese community where neighbors were all Japanese. There was no Hakujin living there. Everything was Japanese-style, which was much older style than the one supposed to be then. Everything was being done by Japanese customs.

Q: And you felt it kind an old-fashioned style, didn't you?

A: Yes, I did. I felt it funny. I thought that this was not right and that we had to learn some American costumes. But they didn't seem like they would never adopt American manners.

Q: Was the work hard?

A: To me, picking up strawberries wasn't so hard a work, because I was young and also I did it after school.

Q: Oh, you did after the grammar school was over?
A: Yes, I did.

Q: How long have you gone to the grammar school?
A: I have gone to school for one year only, since I had already finished math. and some other subjects, and could skip grades for this reason. Thus I finished the study of up to 6th grade for one year, skipping grades. Then I was to go to high school, but my parent told me not to.

Q: So you finished all the grammar school's study for one year, but couldn't go to high school.
A: No, because my parent didn't send me to school.

Q: Oh, that's a shame.
A: I could have gone to high school by a loan... Since my parent wanted to go back to Japan, hopefully in two years, he wanted me help him as much as possible.

Q: How did you feel when you met your father for the first time in your life?
A: I just could not feel that he was my father at all. I was 4 years old when he came to America, thus I didn't remember his face. When I saw him again at the age of 16, I couldn't remember any impression he gave me then, feeling like he was a mere stranger to me. He didn't feel that I was his son, and treated me like a stranger, too.

Q: What did you say to him when you met your father?
A: I couldn't say, "Papa!" no "Oto san (dad, father in Japanese)", and had a hard time. I've only lived with him for two years after that, but I was really sad when he was leaving for Japan. I couldn't help crying. Maybe I had a feeling for him as my parent (by that time).

Q: But didn't you think of going back to Japan with him then?
A: No, I didn't. At that time I was thinking of earning 100,000 yen, remembering of the story of a dog insurance. Thinking that I shouldn't be like this after he left, I became a school-boy. But I just couldn't concentrate on studying, thinking, "I have to earn 100,000 yen. 100,000 yen." I grudge me the time I was spending for school. Of course this way of thinking was changed when I became a Christian. Could I tell this story now? I moved to Vacaville from Florin.

Q: So you went to Vacaville two years after you came to America, after your father went back to Japan, didn't you?

A: Yes, I did. In Vacaville, I became a Christian.

Q: What was the motive of your becoming a Christian?

A: The story was quite complex. When I was living in a place in Vacaville, a Japanese minister used to visit our place which was 7 miles away from town by bicycle. At that time I was still thinking that I was a very serious, good boy, and that I didn't need any religion. Therefore I didn't listen to this minister. My friends told me to come to listen to him, and said, "It's good for you." We went to the place, but I got out of the place secretly when the minister arrived. I wouldn't listen, thinking, "Religion is for insincere people to believe in. A model youth like myself doesn't need to believe it." I must have been strong-minded. On the other hand, I had a scent that religion was necessary for people through the talk of my school teachers and the experience on the boat on the way to America. But I didn't have any thought of my entering into a religious life. At that time, Shashin-Kekkon (picture-marriage) was getting popular. The picture-brides coming to America were at the age of 18 to 20, while their bridegrooms receiving them were around 40, about 20 years older than their brides. Consequently their husband-wife relationship wasn't too good. Hurting or running away were happening all the time everywhere. Such an incident also took place where I was living. A young man who was 3 years older than I committed adultery with a wife and decided to elope. I happened to know this affair, and said to the woman, "God would never forgive you for such a thing. So forget about the attempt, which will surely end in a failure." Then she began to allure me, since I knew her affair. She tempted me so many times. By the way, I had been studying Bible from an English man to learn English. At that time I was reading Genesis where a man was tempted and lost the Paradise, so I thought that I must not yield to the temptation. Being young, I was almost yielding to the allurements which she tried on me so many times. I thought, "This is no good, I have to do something." And I realized that I was not a strong-minded person to resist temptations after all. I thought that I had to find out something very strong for me to rely on.

One day, the man who had led my elder brother into religion gave me the Bible. In such a rural place where I was living, we had a public bath. When I was in the bath with some other people, the man gave me the New Testament without Psalms, saying, "You seem like you have some trouble within you. Read this." I thought, "What is this, anyway? Shall I read it?" I felt like reading the Bood. I went up to a mountain and opened the bible. I opened the first page, where all the family tree of Jesus was written. I thought, "Oh, it is not interesting at all!" and went back home without reading. Then I felt like reading it again, I opened around the last part of the Bible, which was the Revelation. "Oh, this is no good, it's so boring!" Thus I left the Bible untouched for a long time. Again I felt like reading it, so I opened a middle part of the Bood. This time, which happen to be Matthew 5:43 which read "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you..." It happened to be a War-time, and I thought, "If we love our enemies, the world would be in peace. I didn't know that there is such a fine religion. I am going to be a Christian now!" Then the person who had given me the bible said, "Today we are having Dr. Johnson from Methodist Church. Why don't you take this oppotunity and be baptized?" What a thing he told me who had never been to church before! Anyway, I went to church for the first time in my life, listened to his sermon for the first time, and received a baptism on that day. It was on February 3rd in 1916.

Q: In 1916? Then you were at the age of 20, weren't you?

A: Yes, I was 21 years old. It was 8 O'clock in the evening when Dr. Johnson finished his sermon. I still remember it clearly. When he was baptizing me, he said, "Will you obey Kame-sama (he meant Kami-sama, the Lord. Kame means turtles in Japanese.) All your life?" I thought this funny, because he pronounced Kame for Kami. Anyway I said, "Yes, I will." and I was baptized.

Q: Did he speak Japanese?

A: Yes, he did. He was a priest of Methodist Church.

Q: What was the name of the person who gave you the bible?

A: Mr. Mita. He said that he had a B.A.. He also worked hard for people. He spoke bold things, didn't he? He even gave the Bible to me who had never been to church before. It is good to be baptized after you know everything, but it is also good to be baptized boldly when young.

Q: What happened to her who tried to tempt you?

A: I heard that she became a Christian.

Q: Did she elope?

A: No, she didn't, because she found out that her affair was revealed to her husband by a secret letter.

Q: How old was hse then?

A: She was 22 years old or so.

Q:

Q: Was she older than you?

A: Yes, she was, since I was 21. The other man was 23 years old or so.

Q: At that time, there weren't many women, were there?

A: That's right. There were few women then, and their husbands were 20 to 23 years older. Thus they had troubles all the time. After I became a Christian, I was engaged in mission work. I also read the Bible. I didn't have a wife then, and I moved to Florin again.

Q: How long had you lived in Vacaville before moving to Florin?

A: I had lived there for 4 years, and moved to Florin, where I got married later.

Q: How old were you when you got married?

A: It was in February, 1922 when I got married, then I came to San Jose with my wife on February 24, 1922.

Q: Did you marry when you were in Vacaville?

A: No, I got married in Florin.

Q: Oh, I see. Do you remember something else that happend when you were in Vacaville?

A: Yes, I remember quite a few things. I became a Christian there. Althought I was young, I worked as a Chairman of missionary department of my church.

Q: Was it a Japanese church?

A: Yes, it was. The Vacaville Methodist Church was next to the oldest that is a church in San Francisco, I suppose. Anyway it was a very old church. The priest of the church took 7 officers to (kaketishiko) which was between California and Mexico to grow cotton to earn money after the War was over. He also invited me to go with him, but I refused the proposal. I said, "It is wrong that a minister(to do such a gamble) You will surely fail it." So I didn't go, but 7 main figures of the church did. These 7 officers went down. In that year, the unexpected heavy frost killed all the cotton plants. They raided fund and tried again the following year. The heavy frost killed the plants again. After that, they were scattered. The minister became a gardener and is living in Los Angeles. Getting old, he is thinking of going back to ministry again since the gardener's work has become too heavy for him, I hear. I don't know anything about the seven people; where they went or anything. This was the main incident that took place in Vacaville.

Q: What happened to the church?

A: The church could not survive. They sold it. This was after the War. The man who was married with a younger sister of Rev. Yamakawa, who is now a widower living in Tokyo, and who was my best religious friend. And after that I haven't heard anything from anybody.

Q: What else do you remember?

A: There was a woman doctor in Vacaville, who was around 28 years old and quite active.

Q: Was she a Japanese?

A: Yes, she was a Japaense. She had been educated in Japan, came to America, and was working as a doctor in Vacaville. But she killed herself. Why? Well, I used to tell her to have a religion. She said, "I wish I could, but I can't." I often went to her place and said, "You are a little bit haughty. Get rid of your haughtiness."

Do you know the place called Lodi which is famous for its production of grapes? When I was in Lodi, the telegram came and said that she had committed suicide. Later when I had a chance to visit the place, I heard that she had killed herself by taking poison in front

on her friends, suffering and struggling awfully. I used to visit her often. For that reason, I don't know, I had a dream of her about the same time when she committed suicide. In that dream, I went to some place one day. It was cold. Then the doctor came up to me and said, "Mr. Oka, I have to go there at last." "What do you mean by 'there'?" She pointed the place, where I saw thousands and thousands of ghosts (tamashii) making loud noise. I thought, "Is it between hell and heaven?" And I woke up from the dream. The time was exactly the same as she killed herself. Therefore, I just cannot forget this easily. I was frightened. I suppose that there exists Masayume (dreams that come true.)

Q: Was the doctor married?

A: No, she wasn't. She was only 28 years old and still studying hard.

Q: Oh, that's a shame, isn't it?

A: There was another suicide happened. This time, a man did. He was earnestly attending church. He had been a sailor, and taken passage in secret. He got interested in making money first, then began to make money really hard, and finally began not to appear in the church any more. Then he went to Lodi to grow grapes, kidnapped a 8 year old girl there, and she got lost. He killed her some place. I heard that he hanged himself. He was being detained pending trial.

Q: He hanged himself in a jail?

A: Yes, he did. I knew him well. He worked really hard. One day he stopped coming to church, so I was wondering why. He liked to work and worked very very hard even on Sundays. And this happened. Thus, I really think that we have to rest on Sundays, even if we don't make money. I have never worked on Sundays.

Q: And they couldn't find the girl, couldn't they?

A: No, they couldn't find her. I suppose that he killed her and buried the body somewhere. Anyway he hanged himself before confessing the truth. This was also a big incident to the church.

Q: How many Japanese people were there in Vacaville?
 A: In the whole Vacaville?

Q: I mean around Vacaville.
 A: I've never counted its number, but quite a few of them were living there in Vacaville area.

Q: Were there around a thousand Japanese people?
 A: Yes, quite a few of them. They were living in Vacaville, Suisun City, and (Mujina). There were China gambling houses, a few fish markets, quite a few Japanese stores in Vacaville, so on Sundays, these places were full of Japanese people. I used to go to Robbedendaa (roadside preaching place for Japanese people), where almost 200 people used to come. I was quite interesting.

Q: Were they listening well?
 A: Yes, they were. Some hooted, saying, "We, the young, don't do such a thing! Go to Japan and see!" The reason was that the people of our church had never been to Japan. The Place was so far away, that is, the end of Suisun where Fuji Orchard were, that the people didn't know what was church even if they could tell how old the trees were. On Sundays I invited them, shouting, "Please come to church, everybody!" and they followed me. It was fun. One day, I went to a Buddhist church. The priest of the church, whose name I am not telling though, gave a sermon drinking. I thought it was not good that the priest gave a sermon drinking, and I went over to him to give him some suggestion. I asked the priest, "How does the Buddhism treat liquor? I would like to know about the Buddhism a little." He said, "I am listening to your preaching on the road all the time. I've never heard that you must not drink in your religion, yet you don't drink at all. In Buddhism drinking is prohibited as one of the five commandments, but we all drink. I know it's wrong. The reason is that the Buddhism is too deep and complex. Even the praying words, "Namu-Amidabutsu" is (very difficult to understand.) While in Christianity, it is easy for them to carry out what it says, and you are carrying out. Therefore you don't have to seek for Buddhism." I said, "I see." Later the priest went to Drew Theological Seminary in the East and went back to Japan to become a Christian minister, and then went to Manchuria.

Q: Is that so!?

A: Thus, I and one of my friends talked that we should preach the gospel to everyone. When I was young, I often went to Walnut Grove and joined the movement against gambling. As a church representative for these movement I have had some frightening experience. One time I was thrown poison gas by a Chinese gambler, luckily I was safe, but one was killed. His name was Takemotsu. He was a manager of the movement, working very hard for it, but shot to death. His body was found in a ditch. Although gambling is not so much popular today, it was so popular at that time that all of my friends went to the gambling place except Christians. I positively worked hard for the movement, and did some brave things, being young and reckless unlike myself now.

Q: Did the Japanese people lose a lot of money there?

A: Yes, they were taken away all the money they had earned by working. The white boss of a hops ranch where we the Japanese people were working to pick them decided to build a gambling place. He even hired police men, paying them some money. The money that the Japanese people earned by picking the product was all absorbed to the place. The boss also gambled. If he lost, he could bring as much money he wanted from his home again. Therefore he became like a real boss of the people. They had to work without getting paid. I used to warn them strictly, but they would not listen to me. They all gambled. Things are different now since we have a wife, but at that time, most of them were single.

Q: It sounds that the life then was rough. Was prostitution practiced at that time?

A: Yes, there were quite a few of them. They were not only white women but also quite a few Japanese, too.

Q: You mean Japanese women?

A: Yes, they were. Usually prostitution was practiced together with gambling, that is, wherever gambling places were, prostitutes were, and wherever prostitutes were, gambling places were existed. They had liquor, too. Liquor, gambling, and women, these three always go together. At that time, most of the men who didn't have wife went through this. I those days, quite a few prominent Christians made hard

efforts, but that was not enough.

Q: You mean the efforts were not enough?

A: No. We lost the battle, sorry to tell, though. Things have changed, since they got a wife and their own family. But in those days, quite a few of them were single.

Q: In your Vacaville days, were there quite a few problems of picture-brides?

A: Yes, there were not only in Vacaville but everywhere. These news were much in the newspapers all the time in those days; the news of troubles they had had, hurting, beating, and so on.

Q: In those days?

A: I suppose it was a little later. When I was in Vacaville, the troubles were not happening so often. First, picture-marriage got really popular, then it was prohibited. So the people had to do Yobiyose, going to Japan to bring their bride to America. Later we were prohibited even Yobiyose, and became unable to bring back bride from Japan. Just one year before this prohibition, I went to Japan and got married, knowing that I would be unable to do this the next year.

Q: So you came back to Florin from Vacaville, didn't you?

A: Yes, I did. Two of us, myself and my wife, had lived in Florin for 4 to 5 years until we moved to San Jose.

Q: Did you grow strawberries again in Florin?

A: No, I didn't. I grew grapes only, but I couldn't make so much profit from them. So we moved to San Jose.

Q: What things do you remember when you were in Florin?

A: In Florin, a big problem of liquor happened. In those days, there were no Christians that were not making liquor in Florin. The reason was the grapes they were growing. They made wine from the grape refuse which came from the grapes they had cleaned up. Thus, in Florin, everybody including Christians was making wine. Consequently they came to drink it themselves. They had to serve wine to their workers, too. I, myself, didn't. Even I tried, the wine came out sour. There is a certain way to make wine, but I was not good at it. So when I employed workers for my orchard, I said, "I

don't serve wine, but I serve you good meals instead." Then the Northern California Japanese Christians Federation decided that we Christians must not make nor drink wine, which caused us the problem. I and one other person were the only one left out of the problem. The ministers warned the rest that it's no good. An official of the church went on a spree at his daughter's wedding with the guests, serving too much liquor. This incident made the Federation accuse the church and the minister, saying, "After the decision of not drinking or making liquor, it was served publicly!" The minister suffered quite a bit standing between the Federation and the person. I and the other man used to go out together to break barrells of wine, saying, "It is not good that they have barrells." I did this positively, nobody agreed to this, though. At that time, we could not tell how far the Christians' range covering.

Q: Was there already a Japanese church then?

A: Yes, there was. But I can't find the people any more who were the church members at that time. After the War, home prayer meetings were held occasionally, and almost 100 people gathered. Thus we couldn't have it at home, and we did the meetings at a barn where we stored or packed grapes. We, the Japanese people, were living close together, so everybody in that area could easily gather together whenever the meeting was held. Later, we devided the area into some sections, placed a leader in each devision, and held the meeting separately. Even we devided into smaller groups, still quite a few people attended the meeting of each devision.

Q: How did you find your wife?

A: Are you going to publish this interview?

Q: Well, we are going to translate this into English to show Sansei and the next generations. If you would like, we could change your name into some other name, or we could leave your name as it is. You have your choice.

A: It's better for me if you change my name. Then I could tell the truth without hesitation.

Q: All right.

A: Since my wife is a woman, she cares about appearance, and doesn't want to be written about something shameful.

Q: I see. So we will change your name into something else.

A: To tell the truth, our marriage was a big failure. Do you know Rev. Yamakawa who is already deceased, but lived in Berkeley for a long time. He was a minister of a Methodist Church. When he was leaving for Japan, I gave him 500 dollars or so, saying, "I'm going to loan you," knowing that he would not accept the money if I said, "I'll give you." He was in trouble with money then, so I gave him this money faithfully. It was Rev. Johnson who gave me baptism, but I respected all the people who were engaged in religious life. And he didn't have enough money when he was leaving for Japan, so I gave him 500 dollars, which was quite a bit of money at that time, saying, "I'll loan you this money without interest nor time limit." He said, "In return, I am going to arrange your marriage with a Japanese woman who is pious and graduated from a mission school in Japan." So I was waiting. He wrote to me that he had found a person, but that she was not proper because her purpose was to come to America and not to get married. He seemed that he was looking around for my bride busily, but the time that the law prohibited us to bring brides from Japan was coming close. I couldn't waste time any more, besides my parents were getting concered about my marriage, so I went to Japan to look for my bride. As soon as I got to Japan, my parents told me that they had already found ;my bride. She was a daughter of my parents' friend. They insisted that I should marry her, while I was waiting for the answer from Rev. Yamakawa. They got hard on me, and told me that they were going to disown me unless I married her. Even my relatives got together and told me that they would also break with me as their relative unless I married her whom my parents and her parents had already promised each other as my bride. Being young, having visited Japan after a long time, I surrendered to my parents and relatives. I was forced to marry her whom I had never seen or talked. It was not a love-marriage or anything. Since I had not associated with girls so much before, and didn't know how to treat them, I came to spoil my wife. Thus she didn't listen to to easily. We went to church frequently, but she would not become a Christian.

Q: How many years younger was she than you?

A: She was nice years younger than I, though I didn't like my wife too much younger than I. I knew, since someone had told me, that it was easier for wife to lead husband into religion, but that it was hard for husband to lead wife into religion since she knew her husband's faults. That's why I had wanted to get married with a Christian. I was told a lie by a minister in Japan. My father and the minister knew well each other, since the minister often came to my parents' home to get radishes which my father could grow fine and good. The minister wrote me that she, my wife, came to church earnestly. I guess he was bribed by my parents and told to tell me that she was a Christian. So he wrote a letter to me to tell me that she was a Christian. After we got married, I asked her about this. She said, "No! I have never tolded talked with such a minister. The church was not Catholic, but it was Episcopal Church, which was like a church to preach. It had two different d-ors; one for men and one for women. When I visited the church, I was confused. You must use differnt entrance and exit from that of women's. Even seats were separated between men and women, and they were sitting separately. They didn't read the Bible, and they prayed on their knees, reading a special book.

Q: That's a book of the Episcopal Church.

A: They didn't rad, the Bible, they used the book instead. They said that they didn't need the Bible. Thus I got confused. Anyway, I got married with her. She didn't attend church, making up some reason such as her friends were coming or relatives were visiting. She got upset if I told her hard on her attending church.

Q: Then you came to San Jose, didn't you?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: What made you decide to go to San Jose?

A: Please don't write my real name.

Q: No, we won't

A: A major of the Salvation Army, Masaji Kobayashi was a travelling preacher and used to visit the church in Vacaville when I was there. We got along with each other very well. I used to meke and serve him a cup of coffee since there was nothing in the church at that time. When I was in Florin, Mr. Matsushima, a member

of the Salvation Army, said to me, "In Higashino Nohen (Farm) in Fresno, the Salvation Army is looking for a homer. They want the homer somebody who is religious." He asked me, visiting my place, to be a homer there. The air in Florin was not too good, and I thought that I would be better off in Fresno. I accepted the proposal. He said that there was everything we needed in Fresno and that schools were also close. At that time I had a 5th-grader child, who is dead now. He said, "There is everything including a truck and a car, so why don't you give away yours to people." I had had 2 horses, a truck, a car, and everything, but I gave them all to my relatives and neighbors. When I was ready to move to Fresno, the major, Mr. Kobayashi asked me to enter an officers' school of the Salvation Army, Trinity college in San Pedro, before going to Fresno, and told me that that would make my advantage doubly insured. So I believed him. My wife opposed to this idea, saying that she didn't want to take part in Salvation Army. I didn't have any choice left, having given away all my things, and I went to the school where everybody was white except myself, a Japanese. At that time, the relationship between Japan and China was bad, so they didn't let me go to a China town since it was dangerous for me. Only two more months were left for me before graduating from the school and becoming a formal member of the Salvation Army. If you were white, you could have become a certain rank. Anyway, I had to have my tonsils removed then. The same day I had the operation, I was told to go to (Fuimas?) for field operation. Since there was a rule that we had to obey senior officers' commands, I had to go there. It was cold. I was sleeping one night. They turned off every light as soon as a trumpet was played. Then I felt something slippery water in my mouth. I wondered, "What is this? Is it my saliva?" The next morning I found out that the blood was all over me. The wound which had been sewn up was open. The hospital was full of people waiting for operations, so I went to a doctor elsewhere. The doctor said to me, "I suggest you get out of the Salvation Army, if you want to live. It is quite wrong for them to send you such a place." I decided to follow his suggestion, and said to the Major Kobayashi, "Do you have any place in your mind that I could go? I can't go back to Florin any more, though." He said, "There is a house in (Aibisho ?) near San Jose. Will you stay there for a while, since the climate is good

ALVISO?

for bringing up children?" I this way, I came to(Aibis) from where I came to attend a church in San Jose.

Q: Where was the school?

A: It was on Schubert Street in South San Francisco. It was like a big castle standing on a high hill, which you could go to by taking the old road to San Jose. Today the school doesn't exist any more; it was sold to a Catholic Church.

Q: How did you obtain food for your children?

A: Since I was in the officers' school, I ate and slept there. My family lived in a Japanese (hoei? Living quoter?).

Q: Was it operated by the Salvation Army?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: You have done quite a thing, haven't you?

A: Yes, indeed. And I had an awful experience. I needed quite a bit of money for clothes and children, but I had already spent all the money before coming here and didn't have much with me. Besides, it was the time of Hoover, the Depression Period. Then I had acute appendicitis, and entered a hospital in San Jose. The neighbors were bad. When My children were singing a hymn, they shouted at him, "Shut up! Stop that Christian song!"

Q: Were they Japanese?

A: Yes, they were. All three of them. One was a rowdy who had killed a man once, the next was a bad drunkard and the last one was hard on those who had to do with the Salvation Army, because he once got married through the Army's arrangement, but couldn't get along with her well. Since he knew that I had belonged to the Salvation Army, he did us awful things. I have experienced persecution, poverty, and illness--three at once time. I could never forget the time that I suffered the most.

Q: How did you escape from thes situation?

A: Rev. Osuga helped me a lot. He didn't have so much money, but I didn't have any. Every day I had to go to hospital after the appendicites operation. I was confiscated my car, since I could not pay the hospital bill. The minister made efforts on this case with the hospital, lent me some money to pay the bill. I paid the hospital and had my car back.

- Q: The depression in 1933 came after you had come to San Jose, didn't it?
- A: Yes, that's right. The depression started in the year when we moved here. I had 4 children and another baby was expected. I had, thus, totally 7 people to support. I had a real hard time then. They didn't give me any job because of the depression. Even white people couldn't get a job. I found a house in (Fuchianchi?). This hut was built by a Japanese when he was working there. He couldn't have this house since the lot was belonged to a boss. He told me to buy it or leave. So I told about this to my boss. He said that the man had no right to do such a thing to me, but the man said, "This is the house I built. I don't want you to live in the house. Leave at once." He constantly told me to go out.
- Q: Was he a Japanese?
- A: Yes, he was. I was weak then because of the operation I had had, so I was not doing any hard work. Then he spit on me. I thought how rough a Japanese could be. The boss told me that I could stay there. When my children were singing hymns, he shouted at them, "I can't write a letter! Shut up!" His house was quite away from ours, though. I was really awful, but I overcame it. All my seven children liked studying. They graduated from universities and have good jobs now.
- Q: From where did your income come when you were sick?
- A: Since we were living in a free apartment, we could barely survive. I lost a lot of weight then, but didn't care about my appearance.
- Q: You didn't work, did you?
- A: No, I couldn't, because it was just after the operation. However, I started working as soon as I became able to.
- Q: How long was this appendicitis operation apart from the operation of tonsils you had had when you were going to the school?
- A: After I quit the officers' school, I worked for the Japanese (hohgeki) for a while, carrying sacks to various places.
- Q: Then you moved to this place.
- A: Yes, I did.

Q: Had it passed one year or so?

A: Yes, it had passed about one year.

Three years had passed since I entered the school. Although they fed us, I needed money for clothes, miscellaneous things, and also donations. So I suffered quite a bit. When I was in Florin, I couldn't make so much profit, because grapes were sold at low prices. If the price of grapes was high...Anyway, I thought that it was better for me to work for people, since the price of grapes was low.

Q: How long had this living lasted in...?

A: San Jose?

Q: What was the name of the place that you moved to?

A: It was Albiso, where you could live free.

Q: There you met these three men...

A: Yes, I made a living there, reduced to poverty.

Q: How long had such a living lasted?

A: It had lasted for 3 years, although it was the first year that I suffered the most. Then I became able to work. I worked really hard. White people liked the people that they could trust. I was sincere enough to gain their trust. I was sincere. The other Japanese on the other hand, drank and slept without doing their working--watering grasses. I worked hard while they were sleeping. They trusted me and decided to make me a foreman. Therefore the neighbors got harder on me.

Q: I see. Were they working at the same place?

A: Yes, they were. And we were living in the same lot. The former residents had already left, but they had to leave their houses there. They were not good houses, though. It was a convenient place, located by a road. This was the place that a platoon leader of the Salvation Army in San Jose recommended to me saying, "I found a vacant house for you. They say that the neighbors are so bad that it is dangerous to manage their house. So somebody is needed to go over there to live in the house." Having heard that it was free, I decided to go to live in the house. Later I found out that the former resident was that Japanese man. At that time, Japanese people were bad while the Japanese people today aren't. They don't persecute Christians now, but they did in those days, telling awful things.

Q: The white people didn't oppress the Japanese Christians?

A: No, they didn't at all. They trusted us, the Japanese Christians. Thus some told that they were Christians even if they were not, in order to buy property or so. When I went to Japan to look for my wife, I and three other friends of mine went with a tourist group. These three men, wherever the group stopped, went out to buy prostitutes. I said to one of them whom I knew well, "You are a Christian, aren't you? A Christian shouldn't go to such a place." He said, "No, I am a Christian in America, and a Christian only in America. If you were in Yokohama, you would be a Christian only in Yokohama." There were 17 tourists in the group, and they all went out to the place to have fun except two, myself and another Christian from . Anyway the three Japanese men, who were from Florin, went out to the place in Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, or Kyoto wherever we stopped. When they came back from the place, they complained, saying, "It's really costly there! I had to pay not only when I went in but when I left!" I said, "Then don't go!" "But I can't do this in America....," he answered. Always two of us remained in an inn at night. At that time, this type of persons were all over, and were called "Yokohama Christians." Since there was no Haneda (Airport) existed, the people from abroad arrived at Yokohama, where they gave up being a Christian as soon as they arrived. Thus they were called "Yokohama Christians." They had become a Christian in America in order to win the confidence because the white people trusted Christians.

Q: Then what did you do after the three-year living in the house?

A: Then I went to San Jose.

Q: So you moved up to San Jose, didn't you?

A: In San Jose, I grew raspberries and vegetables. Well, I don't have much to talk about this business, but I was doing on quite a scale. The children were growing up. At that time, raspberry business were all over in San Jose, so I decided to grow a new specy of raspberries in Newark. I decided to grow raspberries 60 % in San Jose, and 40% in Newark. It took one year to plant seedlings. By the time when the trees were about to bear fruit, I had to

go to a relocation camp. It was ridiculous! Some received an indemnity for the damage. In my case, since my children had been very young, I had obtained the land under the name of a white person. Therefore I couldn't get a penny for compensation. I poured quite a bit of labor into the raspberries, having my children help me, working hard for one whole year.

Q: But you didn't get any money, did you?

A: No, I didn't. I should have requested compensation for the damage, but I thought it would not work since the land was under a name of hakujin (whiteman). Actually it was against law to do a business under someone's name.

Q: Where were you when the Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: I was at a place in San Jose, about a few miles away from here, where I was growing quite a bit of raspberries, sharing the business. Then I heard the news that the Pearl Harbor had been attacked on radio. When I was living in Aibiso, there was a powerful man named Zancar who was in Charge of that whole area. I used to visit his house for so many years. He said, "This morning the Pearl Harbor was attacked. I feel so sorry for you all, but I have to take care of myself, too. Work for me at my place. Bring your check, and I will cash it for you." When we were being relocated, he rent us a truck which was used to carry dogs. We loaded various things on the truck to carry them to the church, and put them in the basement. He sent me various things when I was in Heartmountain. Mr. Zancar was the person...

Q: Was his name Zancar?

A: Yes, it was. He, Mr. Zancar at Aibiso, was pretty famous. ALVISO?

Q: What was his Name?

A: It was Cartener. Cartener Zancar was his name. He is already passed away.

Q: How did you feel when you heard the news that the Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: I felt so bad. I heard about this on Radio. I thought, "This is no good!" A few days later, I went to the downtown and I was really uncomfortable, feeling that everyone was glaring at me! Of course they were not, but I felt that way since I was ashamed and feeling very small. Since then I stopped visiting the Downtown often. Japanese was the

one that started first. I thought, "If Japan had to start it first, she must have some weak points. Therefore she will not be able to gain. Thus when I was put in a Camp, I didn't stay there and went out to work.

Q: How did you know that you were being relocated?
A: Relocation...

Q: Fliers or something were distributed?
A: No, they weren't. Church informed me about this. First, all the Christians were to be relocated at the same place together, but this plan was put out and we went to Heartmountain in Wyoming together with the rest of the people. Most of the people in San Jose went there. We went to the place by train from here.

Q: Did you go directly to the place?
A: No, where was the place near Los Angeles?

Q: Was it Santa Anita?
A: Yes, it was.

Q: Did all the people from here went to Santa Anita?
A: Yes, that's right. We stayed there for 2 months, then went to Wyoming.

Q: How did you feel when you were put in a Camp in Santa Anita?
A: It was very hot, and I thought, "What an unpleasant place we were put in!" But I was not so sad since there were quite a few people that I knew in the Camp.

Q: Was it an inconvenient place?
A: The food was bad. They didn't feed us decently there. The Jew played an active part in taking care of the food, I heard, so the meals were very poor.

Q: I wonder why?
A: At the end, the boss of the restaurant there was arrested and put in a jail, because he sold liquor. Quite a few Japanese people were also put in the jail.

Q: Did many things happen in Santa Anita?
A: Oh, yes. There happened a big riot. Hakujo policemen and _____ robbed us of money and jewelry, and this incident was known to everybody later. People began to make an

uproar about this.

- Q: Were policemen getting in the camp in Santa Anita?
- A: Yes, they were. They were watchmen who robbed us of money and so Nisei who were making nets refused to work any more. They told us that some Koreans had done this. Of course murders or something like that didn't happen, but this made us get excited a lot.
- Q: Did the Koreans really do such a thing or...
- A: It was just a rumor, and the truth was that the watchmen had done it.
- Q: Were they hakujin?
- A: Yes, they were. Jewelry was stolen... They entered our room to search for it. Thus we told that we couldn't work. This was one of the biggest incident happened in the Camp. All the policemen and soldiers surrounded us.
- Q: Really? And you did some demonstration...?
- A: Yes, we did. This was settled down rather peacefully.
- Q: What else did you experience inconveniences?
- A: I couldn't think of any inconvenience else, since it was such a short time--only two months.
- Q: Then only food and...
- A: Yes, the food was really poor. We had to line up for a long time, too, and we had a hard time then. There were no churches in the Camp, and I felt somewhat sad.
- Q: What do you mean that you had a hard time when you had to line up?
- A: We, had to stand still for a long time. And it was hot! The hakujin working in the camp weren't too good at all. I felt uncomfortable, because we couldn't get outside with the steel wire fences all around the Camp.
- Q: How was the room that you were provided there?
- A: The room was also inconvenient. The bathrooms were so far away from the room, and they were unclean. I thought, "It's better for me to pretend that I'm in jail." I made myself think that I were in jail.
- Q: Were many rumors talked in the Camp?
- A: I heard some rumors, but I forgot them all. They were not good ones.

Q: Then did you go to Heart Mountain?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: How was it?

It was pretty good there. Food was good, since they served us military's food. We could go out, too, to the near towns. We could also grow vegetables and so on. There were various churches there. We were fortunate for these matters, and it was quite different from the Camp in Santa Anita.

Q: How about Children?

A: I thought that the place was not good for children. They didn't learn good things but bad things.

Q: What do you mean by it?

A: They became ill-behaved. They came not to respect parents. It was the worst that they didn't appreciate how much they owed to their parents. The education wasn't done too well, although I didn't know much about schools.

Q: Did you go out of the Camp at once?

A: I stayed in the Camp the year I was put in it, but the next year I went to Chicago. From there, I went to Montana to work for a railroad company.

Q: So you had worked there for one year...

A: Then I went back to (the Camp) where I had left my family. From the next spring, I started working in Montana.

Q: Was it a railroad work there?

A: Yes, it was. I had worked for a while, I don't remember how many months, though. Then I came back to San Jose by myself, found a house, and called for my family.

Q: Was the war over when you came back to San Jose?

A: Yes, it was. I came back, because the war was over. I thought it was all right for us. Various incidents had happened to the Japanese people who had been back before I did. Some were burnt down their barns. Hearing these things, I thought I shouldn't go back so soon and didn't hurry to go back home.

Q: What were you doing in Montana?

A: I was working on railroads, doing section work.

Q: How was it? were the conditions good then?

- A: They were really nice to Japanese people. We were treated really well not only in the train but at the hotels and the restaurants we went to have dinner. Most of those who were getting on trains were soldiers, but as soon as we got on the train, they stood up to give us their seats. Soldiers were very nice to us wherever we went. I thought, "How good America is!" They loved even their enemies like the workds in the Bible. Wherever we went, the people were nice, except the Italians in Chicago. Hakujin in Chicago were nice to us, too. The people at pubs weren't too good although I didn't go to the place. When a Japanese was passing in front of the pub, the people caught him at once, and strangled his neck, saying, "My father was killed in (Dagaconail) so I'll kill you," being drunk. The rest of the people were all nice to the Japanese people, especially young people and soldiers were really good. Soldiers treated us very nicely wherever we went.
- Q: Was, it in Michigan?
- A: Yes, I liked Michigan very much. It was a good place. The fruits over there were excellent. There were abundant of water and trees, and the peaches turned red both front and back sides. In San Jose you found them with one side red and the other green, but in Michigan they were red all around, and very very sweet. Although they were not so big, peaches and pears were delicious. Also the people there were nice to me. Therefore, I don't want to forget about Michigan, but sometimes it escapes my monory.
- Q: Did you stay in the Camp in the Winter time?
- A: Yes, I did. I returned to the Camp when winter came.
- Q: How was the condition inside the Camp?
- A: It was well-equipped in the Camp, and I really liked it. We got to know our neighbors. In the Camp, I didn't sit still. I worked as a boiler. There was an office where only hakujin were working. I went there to put coals in the boiler at night in the snow. I did this quite a while. Everybody was surprised that I had done such a tough work. I didn't like to _____ so I continued the work. I also went to clean the office early in the morning. I was loved by hakujin, too.

Q: So you worked as a janitor or something like that, didn't you?

A: Yes, I worked as a janitor. I put coals in the boiler since it got cold in Heart Mountain, and cleaned the room.

Q: Didn't any problem occurred in the Camp?

A: No, there were no problems in the Camp of Heart Mountain, since everybody was satisfied there. Some circulated false rumors, though.

Q: Oh, what kind of false rumors were they?

A: When I went out of the Camp to work, they spoke ill of me going out to work.

Q: Is that so?

A: They said that I was a traitor to my country. What a word! They said, "Since Japan is going to win, you would not be able to get reparations from Japan if you went out to work." But I didn't have such a thought.

Q: Were you thinking that Japan was going to lose?

A: Yes, I was. I read American newspapers.

Q: Oh, since you were out of the Camp...

A: I could see from the news that Japan was being pushed toward her country, losing the battle line. About this situation, Japan said that it was for defense. But you couldn't say you were defending when you retreated. So I thought Japan would lose. I was in Chicago when the Atomic bomb was dropped, and I read an article on this which said, "A notice to Japanese people: Since you are innocent, please go to the country to get away. We are dropping a more powerful bomb this time. What we hate is its military and not its people." This flier was in the newspaper. One month later, they dropped the bomb. In this way they had warned the Japanese people before they dropped it. If they had dropped it without a notice, they would have been the one to blame. But they had circulated the fliers, saying, "A notice to you; please go to some rural place. You are not the one to blame. The military is the one to blame." This American action became a controversy, but I think America had done what she had to do. I thought that there would be no way for Japan to win, and wished that they would surrender, I mean that they would end the war at once. In the camp, they spoke ill of those who went out to work.

Q: In the camp of Tule Lake, there happened some awful things. Wasn't it so bad at the Heart Mountain as at Tule Lake?

A: They only circulated false rumors. Some gathered the people to give false news. Since I knew that they were not true, I didn't believe the news even if I went to listen to them. It would have been dangerous if I had acted against the Camp administration, so I didn't say anything to them. To tell the truth, I wished Japan to win, but I had already estimated that they couldn't. I thought that there would be no way for them to gain the war, and that they had better cease the war before they surrendered for their people. Of course it was natural for the Japanese people who had been born in Japan to wish the country win the war. But I was thinking that Japan could never gain. They attacked Hawaii by surprise, didn't they. It was Japan that started the war first. Even if America upset Japan, the country that took a hand in the war first was wrong. The one that hit the other first was wrong. There would be nothing wrong as long as they fought with bad words. But Japan attacked first by surprise. And it was Sunday that they did. Sundays are the days we go to church. Therefore I thought that there was no way for Japan to gain, and that it would be better for me to go out to work. I was in a strange place, besides I didn't have money. I thought that it was better for me than to stay in the Camp talking of trifle things. Some were playing "Go" and "Shogi" but I didn't know how to play them. I didn't learn them, either. I knew that there was no way that Japan could win, seeing movie pictures when I was out of the Camp. I thought, "Since America has such amount of troops, Japan should lose the war naturally."

Q: You saw it in the news, didn't you?

A: Yes, in the news.

Q: What was your wife doing?

A: In the Camp? She was working as a helper of cooks and a dish washer.

Q: How old were your children in the Camp?

A: The eldest one was 20 years old, she was a girl. The boys were 18 and 19 years old. These two boys volunteered, but they didn't go to the field.

Q: How old was your youngest child?

A: The youngest was 6 years old. I was a little bit worried about the education of the children. They became rough and didn't listen to their parents. Not being supported by the parents, they didn't understand how much they owed to their parents. Thus they didn't listen to their parents. I thought that it was no good for them to stay long in the Camp, and that I had to take them out as soon as the war was over. So I went out of the Camp alone just after the war was over, leaving my family.

Q: Did you come back to San Jose?

A: Yes, I did. I took one of my sons with me who was going to a college, and came back.

Q: When you say you came back, do you mean that you came back to San Jose?

A: Yes, I came back to San Jose. At that time, quite a few people from the other states came to San Jose. Some of them I had never seen. They were the people who had gotten to know each other in the Camp and heard that the hakujin in San Jose were nice. When some Japanese people came back to San Jose for the first time from the Camp, the hakujin came to the train station to meet them with a band.

Q: Did hakujin do that?

A: Yes. They came to meet the Japanese people to say "welcome." The people from San Jose were the last that they let go back from the Camp. I almost thought that they would not let us go. I was the person who would rather like to go out of the Camp as soon as possible, because it was uncomfortable in there being small among such a big group of people. So I wanted to go out of the camp sooner, but we were the last. The hakujin of San Jose wanted to support us, the Japanese, so I guess they postponed our going out to the last. When we returned from the camp, they came to the station to meet us with a band. I don't think this happened to any other places.

Q: What did you do here then? You came back here by train and...

A: I came back by train myself.

- Q: What did you go then? .
- A: I went to the church first. Since I didn't have bed, I put the mattress which had been but in the basement on the floor of the church hall to sleep. We ate at a Buddhist church. Everybody was served meals there. I don't remember how much we paid per meal, though. Since the Buddhist church was already full of people staying, so quite a few people stayed at this church, too.
- Q: You mean this church here (Westley Methodist Church in San Jose), don't you?
- A: Everybody put mattresses on the floor of the church hall to sleep on, and went to the Buddhist church to eat.
- Q: Were there quite a few people staying here?
- A: Oh, yes, quite a few of them, maybe 50 people or so.
- Q: Oh, is that so?
- A: When the minister came back, we hold a celebration for his return. The kitchen of this church was very small, because it was just for the minister. There wasn't such a big kitchen then, and wasn't half as big as the one now. We added it later since it was too narrow and inconvenient.
- Q: And your wok was...
- A: The bosses came to pick me up to work.
- Q: Oh, your previous boss?
- A: Yes, and also the other bosses. We advertised on the newspaper.
- Q: Oh, I see. Was it published here?
- A: Yes, it was. They came here to pick us up, since we didn't have a car then. Did they pay so low! They didn't pay us enough at all. They put us hard works and paid half as much as it should have been. And I knew it well. I worked, hitting prunes on trees, picking them up. There weren't many jobs available then, especially for women there were none.
- Q: In what month did you come back?
- A: I came back just before school started.
- Q: Was it in September?

Q: I wanted my son to go to school, so I came back here in September. The hakujin whom I hadn't known before were glad that I came back, not to mention my hakujin neighbors. Italians, Spanish people and Portuguese people were not too good, because they naturally tended to lose work when the Japanese people returned. Especially taking care of vegetables was our speciality, so those who were growing vegetables didn't like us coming back. Also those who were renting very low our thouses after we had left didn't like our return, because they had to leave the house. They didn't welcome us so much, but they didn't do bad things to us, either, except one Japanese of Aibiso was burnt his barn down. In Aibiso, quite a few Portuguese were living, and most of them weren't so much educated.

Q: How long had the life at the church lasted?

A: The boss of Aibiso whom I had been working for found a house for me. I rented it for 15 dollars a month, then called my family. Then I bought a car, and went to work.

Q: Where did you go to work?

A: I worked mainly at the previous place where there was 80 acre of land. When I came back, there were no fruit on the trees, but pruning was needed. My wife worked on the lower part of trees, while I was pruning higher part. There we make 3 to 4 times as much money as we should make at another place. There was a rule that they had to pay a certain amount of money for pruning one tree. They paid quite a bit. With this money, I bought a house later. Although I went out to work when I was in the Camp, I didn't make enough money to buy a house later. My boys helped us when they were home on furlough, so we earned about 50 dollars a day. And this was a lot at that time, 25 years ago.

Q: That's something, wasn't it.

A: So we bought the present house. At that time houses were in short. They prohibited to build new houses then. We couldn't even get _____ because of _____. Therefore houses were in shourt, because new ones weren't being built, and also the people who had come back from the Camp were seeking for them. The house I bought was old, but it was very reasonable compared to the price of today's market. It

seemed very expensive to me then. We started living in the house. I went to various places to earn money, while my wife stayed at home doing household works. All of our children were already grown up then. The youngest one was just graduated from high school, and the rest were already graduated from colleges and working. So we didn't need school expenses for them any more, and we were relieved. Before that, we had had a hard time, growing, 7 children with high education expense. Now, we are being taken good care of by them. They are really good to us, including their wives. Since I don't drive any more and since my eyes are not good, a daughter-in-law comes over 2 times a week to pick my wife up for shopping. They are living up in the mountain, quite far away from here--it takes 20 minutes or so by car. Since their parents, we, have been through the mill, and earnest, they are earnest, too. I am really thankful that I have no good-for-nothing children. They are doing pretty well. Although I am poor, I am fortunate for this matter.

Q: How was the work of gardening?

A: I went all the way to Palo Alto and even farther up to do gardening, but it was a good job. You can do what you like to. Instead of being paid by hour, you got paid by the number of work, so you can work as much as you want to. Also you can work fully. Thus I liked the job very much. It was much better than farming, which was easily influenced by the weather and the prices of the year. You couldn't be sure that you could make profit from farming, while you could earn money by gardening according to how much you worked. But I became unable to drive since my eyes went bad. When I was young, I loved to read books, and used to read a lot, which injured my eyes. Finally 4 years ago, I became unable to drive, I haven't had any accident, thought.

Q: Is there any interesting story about the time when you were doing gardening?

A: I don't have any particular story, but in gardening you can do the work as your own work, thus you can really enjoy it. You just imagine

and plan the work, thinking, "If I plant this, it'll come out like that... What shall I plant here? What shall I make this place?" And you buy all the plants you are going to use by yourself, so it is really fun, like working on your own garden. I really enjoyed the work, but sometimes I had some troubles. Some didn't pay me for my work, some paid me by an invalid check. But these were rare to happen. Since I worked really hard, they paid for that, admitting my sincerity. Therefore this kind of troubles seldom happened. Only once or twice it happened when I just started working gardening.

Q: What did you do then, when they didn't pay you?

A: I had to inform the Labor Commission.

Q: You gave up?

A: I told the person that I was going to inform the Labor Commission, then he paid me, being afraid. I have informed the commission one time, and they got the money at once for me.

Q: What commission did you say?

A: Labor.

Q: Oh, the Labor Commission. I see.

A: They acted for me at once, since there was an evidence that I had worked. Some told me that he had already paid me. This person had gone to someplace the previous month and hadn't paid me. So the next month he was supposed to pay me for the both months together. But he told me that he had already paid me for the previous month. I asked him if he had some document that showed that he had written a check to me, and he couldn't say any more. That was the end of the trouble, if you insisted on your being right. Otherwise they tried to cheat me. But this kind of things have happened only twice for 20 years.

Q: Was the job as a gardener the longest one you have had?

A: Yes, it was. I started working as a gardener when I came back from the Camp, Heart Mountain, and had worked for 20 years since I quit it four years ago.

Q: How many gardens did you work on one day?

A: I didn't like moving around, since loading and unloading things were hard for me. You could earn the most money when you move from house to house quickly. Most of the young gardeners are doing this way, working on a garden for one to one and a half hour to work on another garden the next. But it was a hard work for the people of my age. So I usually went to the rich people's houses that had a big garden to work on, and I worked on one or two gardens a day.

Q: You worked slowly, did you?

A: Yes, I worked on a big place, and got paid quite a bit. You get paid less when you work on a small garden, but you can work on a lot of gardens per day. Therefore you can make more money.

Q: You can make more money by quantity, can't you?

A: Most of Issei gardeners don't work like this, while most of the Nisei do. For us, Issei, it is a hard work to hop around, so we stay and work on one place all day or sometimes half a day. I usually went to work to Menlo Park, which is quite far away from here. The people over there paid a lot, while the people in San Jose didn't. Also I could stay and work for a long time, which meant that I got paid quite a bit. Usually they paid me monthly while I worked certain times a week. This was much better than farming. I could buy the plants by myself at a nursery, and they sold me at a discount if I told them my name. Thus I could make some profit from this, too.

Q: What else do you remember when you think of your life of Issei?

A: Issei don't have to worry about their living because of the social security, but they can't drive. This is the only problem. Therefore they can't go where they want to. I always think that it would be very nice if the people of the church who can drive could accommodate us, Issei, thinking of my situation.

Q: When was the hardest time for you when you look back on your past?

A: The time when I suffered the most was when I was at Aibiso in San Jose, because poverty, illness, and persecution, these three came upon me at once time. And I had my children to support. This was the hardest time I had in my life. The saddest time was when the war between Japan and America broke out. The happiest thing happened in my life was that the World War II ended.

Q: You recovered from illness.

A: I was saved my life by recovering from the illness. I can't forget how happy I was when I was told ----- by Issei. There happened quite a few wars, but at that moment I thought there would be no more war. And it was the happiest time in my life.

Q: Do you think that it is important for human beings to go through difficulties?

A: Yes, of course. It is no good for man not having a hard time, because he can't understand the value of things. I visited Japan twice with my wife, and one time we had a hard time there. One of my sons was working in Japan under the General McArthur. He sent us tickets to go to Japan, saying, "Next year I am going to work at the Department of Defense in America, so this is the only year I stay in Japan. Please visit Japan while I am still here." He said that a Japanese would show us around Japan for me. We went to Japan, excited, and were met by the Typhoon Ise.

Q: What?

A: The Typhoon Ise.

Q: A typhoon. Oh, I see.

A: It came 15 years ago, and we were met by it. We were really miserable then. At that time we went to Wakayama to visit my parents' graves by my son's car. The the radio reported that the typhoon was coming around 6 O'clock, houses started to shake, rattling, and all the lights went out. When I looked outside, the tiles of roofs were flying away like leaves. I saw sheet metals flying away from the roofs of houses. The man of the house where we were staying said, "Don't go outside! Stay in the house." Even in the house the lights were out, candle lights were blown out by the wind, the house were shaking and the raido was out, because electricity was out. You could get informations only from talking to your

neighbors. My son heard people saying, "Such-
 and such place has already been submerged under
 water. Our neighbor village is almost
 flooded. The bank of the river of our village
 is going to be broken. If the bank was broken,
 our village would be washed away." Being near
 the bank, we were worried so much. I thought
 that I came to Japan to die. Three days later
 when we left the place, I found out that it was
 a huge storm; trees were fallen down, houses
 were crushed down, and everything was smashed
 down. Tokyo, where my son's house was, was safe,
 so we were going back to Tokyo. But the road
 to Tokyo was so damaged that we couldn't
 drive through. We had to take a mountain path
 from Ise to Nagoya. The path was very narrow,
 and I found landslide from place to place.
 When I looked down, I saw quite a few cars
 fallen down from the path. It was just
 impossible to help the people down there. The
 path was so crowded with cars going to both
 directions, so we had to stop the car where the
 path was a little wider to let the car of the
 opposite direction pass, and we started to drive
 again. On the way, we ran out of gasoline.
 We were to put it in in Nagoya, but since we
 took the mountain path, the gasoline didn't
 last. My son said, "We ran out of gasoline.
 If we couldn't drive any more, we might be pushed
 down from the path, since people couldn't
 pass it." "We are in trouble. I hope we can
 get gasoline someplace," I was praying.
 Then we found a gas station in a bush. We went
 over there, woke the man up since it was already
 midnight, and asked him if he had gasoline.
 He said that he could sell us a little bit, and
 sold us half a gallon. We paid 4 times as
 much as the regular price. We finally got to
 Nagoya. The city was flooded and like the sea.
 I thought, "How lucky we are to be able to
 get here!" We got there around 4 o'clock in the
 morning, and stayed in the water until the dawn.
 Then a young woman was walking toward us in the
 water. I asked her how we could get to Tokai-Do
 (the main road between Osaka to Tokyo.) She
 laughed loudly and ran away from us. She was
 mad, because her parents and brothers and
 sisters were washed away by the flood. Anyway,
 we finally got to Tokyo without sleeping all
 day and all night. We went to Kyoto from
 Takayama, then we left Kyoto early in the
 morning. It was 11 o'clock in the next morning
 that we got to Tokyo. We drove more than a
 whole day and night without eating and drinking

or sleeping. We were frightened. My son asked me what were the things I enjoyed in Japan. I said, "It was really nice that I could see Mt. Fuji so clearly." We rented a horse and enjoyed the mountain on the horse. I had not seen Mt. Fuji so clearly before. My son also said that he had not seen it so clearly in his stay in Japan so many years. I also said, "Another thing that impressed me is that we were met by the Typhoon Ise. I could never experience like this in California. There are no typhoons there." He said, "Why do you think that you being met by the Typhoon Ise is a good experience? Why do you think it was good, having experienced such a hard time?" I said, "Because we were attacked by the typhoon, we realized that we were fortunate in living in California where the climate was mild and calm. I know this after having been met by the typhoon. Therefore this is a precious experience to me. I have been fortunate, but I was lacking in the heart to thank for the first time in my life, after visiting Japan, I have had a heart to thank. To us, it was a great lesson and blessing." He said, "Is that so?" Therefore it is a good thing for human beings to go through difficulties, otherwise we won't be able to know it. If we were doing whatever we liked to do freely without hardships, we would lose our faith. We tend to take things for granted. The rain after a long time of fine days makes us realize how valuable it is to be a fine day. Therefore, the rain is necessary as well as hardships for us. You can't have a fine day every day. When I was in Japan, I had an awful time. I had never experienced such a frightening time before. I was scared. It was the most frightening experience in my life. I even thought that I had come to Japan to die. This is the only time I have had a frightening experience.

- Q: What do you think about teaching Sansei and Yonsei about the customs and traditions of Japan?
- A: I think it is a very good thing. It is better to teach them also about the good things of Japan than to teach only the good things of America. Of course there are not only quite a few good things of Japan, but also quite a few bad things. The people in Japan lack in

faith. I felt this strongly when I was in Japan. I saw various bad things in Japan. Young people were pushing aside the old and women to get on the bus to have a seat. All the old, women, and children were standing in the bus. This is bad. I saw quite a few bad things going on in Japan. I think it is necessary for us to show them (Sansei, Yonsei) these things, too, for they can correct their ways, seeing these bad things. Without seeing them, you can never correct your manners. When I visited Japan I experienced various things like this, and felt that we had to show them not only good things, but also bad things of Japan. We don't have to hide bad things from them, because they will teach them, too.

Q: What do you think about Sansei's awareness of being a Japanese?

A: It is a good thing for them to be aware of it. They don't have to humble themselves because of their skin color and shortness of height. For example, the wife of one of my sons in Boston went to Phenix, Arizona, with us. There are quite a few Indians living there, as you know. We went to a store selling Indian things. The clerk of the store who was hakujin, asked us if we were Indians. Then my daughter-in-law said, "No. We are Japanese." I said to her, "Why didn't you tell her that we were Americans?" She replied, and told that she had studied when she was 14 years old that Japanese was a very superior race, and that there was no reason to be ashamed of being a Japanese. She said, "Hakujin say that Japanese people are _____ but that's not true. Japanese people came from _____ and they are the people of God. They are the people chosen by God, and very fine. Hakujin boast of their being Hakujin and are calling themselves Americans. But the true Americans are Indians. The rest has come from the other countries, including Japanese. Therefore there is no way that Hakujin can boast. It is Japanese people that should be proud." She is a person like this, so my grandchildren are also pro-Japanese. Her brother received Doctor of Literature degree in Japan, and also Kun-Santo (the third order of merit) from the Japanese Government about a month ago. This was in the papers! He was a professor of

a women's university in Japan, and is now teaching at Indiana University the Japanese literature and racial problems. He is very bright. He was the first person that received Doctor of literature degree, according to the papers.

Q: Do you have something in your mind that you would like to teach to Nisei and Sansei?

A: Yes. I would like them to have a sense of respect for their seniors. In Japan this sense of respect for their parents and superiors still exists though it has been changing recently because of the influences from American and they are forgetting Kohkoh (filial piety). In my opinion, they should listen to their seniors, though it is a good thing for them to be friendly with their seniors. They should respect their seniors more. Nisei and Sansei lack in this sense of respect. Since America is a country of individualism, it is natural for them to be like that, but it is no harm for them to respect their seniors. The people in Japan are still respecting their seniors, although this attitude has been fading away. In my church, there are some people who have this sense of respect, but they are not too many. I would like more Nisei and Sansei to respect their seniors more. Nisei often say that the minister is the one that should take care of this matter since we are paying him. But those who are not ministers should also do something for people. I think they should respect their ministers as well as their seniors.

Q: You say that they don't have the sense of respect don't you?

A: Yes, that's right.

Q: What else do you have that you would like to teach Sansei or some others?

A: They have some good elements in them, but... Even at a committee meeting, Issei would not tell their opinion, and they start complaining about the decisions later. I wonder why they don't say anything at that time. When they have to choose between "Yes" and "No". They raise their hand after seeing the others raise theirs. They should express "no", if their opinion is "no", and don't have to worry about

the others. I always tell them that it is not good. This is a fault of Issei.

Q: In that respect, Sansei are good...

A: Yes, Sansei and Nisei are good. They express their own opinion without hesitation, while Issei are bothered to do so. On the other hand, I feel that Nisei and Sansei should Enryo (reserve) when they have to, but being individualists, they are sometimes too loud.

Q: It's hard, isn't it? Do you have something to share with us?

A: Yes, I have something to share. I have so many things to say, and I usually do it at a prayer meeting for 5 minutes. If you did your sharing too long, you would interfere the others, so I always say that a sharing should be no longer than 5 minutes, and that you should only talk the point, omitting details.

This is the story about the time when I became a Christian. Why did I become a Christian? As I mentioned before, the words in the Bible, "Love your enemies" moved me. I was in Vacaville. When I was in the church there, a young man, about 30 years of age, came to the church with a gun in one of his pockets and the Bible in the other pocket. He seemed to have some plan in his mind. He took out the Bible from his pocket when things were going well with him, then he took out the gun when things took an unfavorable turn. At that time, the minister wasn't in the church and was boarding at some place. The man was conspiring something, and I noticed it. He gathered young people, about 22 or 23 years old, and made a group to conspire something. I kept away the young people who were right-minded from him, and gave them, about 4 people) some other duties. I was the chairman of missionary department at that time. One day he called me, saying, "Would you come with me for a second?", invited me into a room, lock the door, and said to me, you are interfering my plan. I have killed a man in Nevada. Since it makes no differences to kill one or two, I will kill you." He was about to take out his gun, so I was going to jump on him before he took it out. He was rather small, while I was big, and had practiced Sumoh (Japanese wrestling) before. He was mad and his face was red. Just when I was about to jump on him, the words of the Bible, "Love your enemies, and pray for them..." came up

to my mind. I knelt down at once and started praying. Tears fell out of my eyes, and I prayed, "Oh, Lord, he doesn't know anything even if he is doing such a thing. Please lead him, and save him from where he is now." Tears were still running. He had been looking at me with his face so red, then suddenly he turned pale. He said, "Mr. Oka, from now on, please pray for me, although I am like this. I am leaving here for some place else." And we departed. As the time passed, I forgot all about him and didn't pray for him. Then one day, I read an article in the front page of a Newspaper, which read, "Liquor Burglars arrested." It was the prohibition time, and some Japanese were distilling liquor from place to place. They went to those places and threatened the people, saying, "We will inform against you, or hand us money!" So they were called liquor burglars. And their boss confessed that he allured some church people. His name, according to the paper, was Harano, and that was the very person that I had met at the church. Anyway they arrested him, the boss of the group. Reading this I thought, "He was planning this burglary then." But I didn't pray for him, so the illhearted man committed such a crime. He had already been planning the burglary, so he visited the church to look for young obedient people to help him. So I must have been in danger. I would have been shot to death, if I hadn't prayed for him. I believe that the words, "Love your enemies" are truly important. There would be no wars nor troubles with the love that loves even enemies. Love is essential.

I have some more to tell.

After I became a Christian, I went to a camp to work. There, everybody was hard on me day and night, telling all kind of things, since I was the only young person among elderly Issei. They called me "Saite" which meant "a greenhorn." They ordered me to bring water to them, or criticized the Christianity. I bore them. At night I lit the lamp and began to read the Bible. They turned it off, so I lit it again to read the Bible. They turned it off again, and I lit it again. We did this over and over. Finally I won, and they didn't turn it off any

more. The boss noticed this. One day a man in the camp became ill and was hospitalized. When he was discharged from the hospital, the people held a celebration drinking party. They told me to drink. I said, "No, thank you. I don't drink, being a Christian." and refused it. Then they told me to warm the sake in the kitchen. I said, "All right," knowing that it was going to be a trouble if I refused it. I went into the kitchen, put hot water in the sake bottle, and took it to the boss. He got mad, realizing that it was not sake, and splashed it over my head, shouting, "What a thing you put in!" I shouted "What! (Heck with you!)" and tried to grab him. Then, again, the words, "Love your enemies, and pray for them." came up to my mind. I quietly went back to my room and prayed, "He doesn't know anything, so it's not his fault that he did this." Since I had been keeping a diary, I wrote about this in it, saying, "I didn't have enough love. That's why I made him mad and this happened. Please lead him." The next day when I went out to church, the boss read what I had written. He thought that I hadn't written very bad thing about him. Instead I had written that I hadn't had enough love. He was greatly moved, thinking, "Christians are like this!?" Since that day, he became nice to me, calling me, "Young-san, Young-san." Moreover, he began to send his two sons to church, 14 and 15 years old, whom he had called from Japan. Thus the words "Love your enemies" are truly important. Since then so many times, the words, "Love your enemies" came up to my mind, and every time they saved my life from danger. Therefore I think that everybody has to read the Bible. I was led by reading the Bible, so the words of the Bible always come up to me. It has been 59 years since I was baptized in 1916, and I was saved my life from dangers so many times. So I often tell the youth to read the Bible. I say, "Otherwise, you can't understand anything. You can't pray nor confess. Read the Bible." Recently, less and less people read it.

Q: Do you still have the diary?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: Is that so?

A: I have been keeping a diary since I was at the age of 14. I started this when a school

teacher suggested to do it. Unfortunately, I lost quite a few at the time of the relocation.

Q: It's a shame, isn't it.

A: If I didn't lost them at the relocation time, I could have the complete one including the diary before going to the Camp.

Q: Do you sometimes read it?

A: Yes, I do. Reading it again, I remember the things of my past, and say to myself, "Oh, I was like this when young!" "I didn't have enough faith when I was young." It encourages myself to read it. Everybody say that I have a good memory, but that's not true. Because I read the diary again. I can't remember everything, and you forget easily when you get old.

Q: Do you have any other thing to share?

A: I have done quite a few sharing at churches in Oakland, Berkeley, or Alameda as well as at this church.

Q: Could you tell me some more ? The story that you gained from your experiences...

A: Well, its hard to recall it suddenly. I write in a diary about myself as I am or I feel, since it's not for showing to people. Therefore the diary can be a very good confession material. I often say that you are not telling the truth if you say you don't have anything to share. As long as you have faith, it's natural that you get something to share and confess every day and wrote in the church bulletin about my faith, society, and the Bible and myself. If I only talked about myself, it would be a boastful account or a gossip. But when you talk relating your faith to the Bible, it becomes a good confession.

This is about the story of 55 years ago, on November 3, 1918. It says, "It was a very very cold and raiy day." So this must be about the hospital I entered.

This is the manuscript of my confession about 55 to 60 years ago. It says, "It was a very very cold and rainy day today. Selected by the Methodist church, we, the several youth have worked all day long in the rain to move nearly 100 patients of the Swine flu, which is now greatly prevailing, from a tent of a field hospital to a big church of Hakujin. At that

we also caught the flu and were hospitalized there with the high temperature of 105°F. I thought that the hell on earth must have looked like that place. The patients, because of the high fever, were crying, shouting, roaring, and singing loud. The young Japanese men at my right and left sides were tied up with a rope, because they would jump out of their beds. They were crying, shouting, roaring, and singing, too. The man on my left was saying, "Everybody is heartless. Nobody is coming to see me. I don't like this world. I am going to bite my tongue off to kill myself, so bring me a sheet of paper and a pencil." The man on my right side was shouting with pain, "Bank! Bank!" So I asked a nurse about this. She said, "He has quite an amount of savings in a bank, and is worried about it so much that he is suffering like that." I really feel sorry for him, for there is a phrase in the Bible that says, "Save your treasures in Heaven, and your heart shall be in Heaven." The men on my both sides died, and 15 Japanese died in the hospital. I came to know later that every day a few patients had died, crying and shouting. I was encouraged by a nurse who told me the Psalm 23, Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for thou art with me, and in the midst of the chaos of the hell on earth, I absolutely believed in God, read the Bible quietly and prayed all the time. But on Nov. 8, before dawn, my temperature passed over 105°F finally, because I hadn't been able to sleep for so many days, being put in such noises every day and night, and my body had become gradually weak and weaker. It was said that nobody that passed over 105° of temperature could be saved. When I prepared myself for death since the pain I was having was so great that I thought that I couldn't survive, my past life was flashed back clearly in order in front of my eyes, and I came to know that I had so many sins in my past life. Before God, I was ashamed of myself that had been carrying on ugly past with me, and I prayed to God very hard, "Lord, please let this servant of yours remain on this earth for a little more

while, for I don't have qualifications for coming to your side yet." The Lord listened to my prayer at once; suddenly the temprature of my body went down to normal. I was discharged from the hospital on Nov. 11, at 11 O'clock, listening to the bell of the church tolling for celebrating the peace brought by the ending of the Worl War I. When I was told by the nurse that there was no more war when I was leaving, I was truly happy. For 55 years since then, there occurred so many wars and still people are fighting in various places, I have been put to the test and faced to death so many times. But I might not be ready to meet the Lord. He still let me stay on this earth. In order to be well prepared to come to his side happily when He called me, and in order to receive from Him the words of praise, "You, good and faithful servant," and the crown of eternal life, I am working for Him every day.

Q: It's very good.

A: I have quite a few like this, and I've recorded all. This is what I talked in Oakland. I have already told about this, but could I do it again?

I am going to confess why I who didn't care for a religion at all, being conceited by being praised by the people that I had been a model boy, well-behaved and dutiful towards my parents became a Christian. My father left for America when I was 5 years old, so I was brought up by my mother until I became 16. Seeing my mother praying every morning and night, looking up at the sky, that her children might grow healthy and honest, I had been brought up docile, being implanted in my mind the thought that the God existed unseen and that I couldn't do anything bad or wrong since He would know it when people wouldn't. One day when I was 14 years old, a very famous Buddhist priest was coming to have a big three-day and night preaching meeting. So I went to the meeting to listen to his preaching, taken by my mother. Although I didn't understand his sermon, I saw quite a few people saying with tears in their eyes, "Arigatai (Thanks, Thanks), Namu-Amida-Buddha." I started on my way home, thinking that the sermon must have been so

blessing. Seeing the people who had already started to speak ill of their neighbors, daughter-in-law, and mother-in-law, I thought "Religion is like liquor; you have a good time when you drink, but you suffer when you become sober in return. A famous Russian once said that religion was opium, and I thought that he was right. I said to myself, "Religions are no use. I would never believe any religion in my life. I would never be seduced by any religion. If I lived my life right and honestly, even though I didn't believe a religion, the God would protect me. All right I will become one's model." And I came to America when I was 16 years old by my father's Yobiyose (call.) Every time I was praised by the people that I was a well-behaved, dutiful boy towards my parents, my selfconceit must have increased more. I made up a list of things I should keep: One--believe in God but not in religion every day; two--keep away absolutely from drinking, smoking, women, and gambling; three--do good things even if they are too small, and don't do a bad thing at all even if it is small. I took an oath by using sealing my keppan (a seal of one's right thumb with one's blood) on the list so that I kept the promises strictly. In this way, my self-conceit increased day by day and I came to advise my father sometimes. He said, upset, "What an impertinent fellow! No children advise his father!" Whenever a pastor visited my house that was a few miles away, I got out of the house secretly and would not listen to him. My father said, "The pastor doesn't talk about bad things. Why don't you listen to him?" I said, "Religion is not necessary for those who are well-behaved, honest men," and would not get close to the pastor. At that time, a young man of my neighborhood committed adultery with a young woman who had come as a picture-bride and was planning to elope. I found out this, and said to the woman, "God never forgive you. It's obvious like fire that the plan ends up in failure." Then she started to tempt me, just like saying, "Doku-kuyeba-sara-made" (When you take poison to kill yourself, you don't mind to eat its container). I tried to yield to the temptation, thinking, "How could I commit such a crucial sin before God?" I somehow

managed not to yield to it, but I was fully convinced of the weakness of my mind. I realized how weak I was before the temptation who had been thinking that I was a model youth, well-behaved who didn't like religion and was haughty. I thought, "Even if I didn't pray, God would protect me as long as I'm doing right. I have to lean on something stronger than myself." When I was worried about this problem, in a public bath house, a man gave me a book, saying, "You seem like having some trouble, don't you? Read this. It was the New Testament without the Psalms. Like the saying, "Drowning man would even grab a straw." I who didn't like a religion felt like reading it. I opened the first page of the Bible, it was written about the family tree of Jesus Christ. I opened the last page of it, that was the Revelation. I didn't understand both of them. So I left the Bible untouched for 10 days or so. Then I felt that I couldn't help reading it. So I opened a middle part of the Book and read it. It was the Matthew 5:43, and I was very much moved by the words, "Love your enemies." At that time, it was in the middle of the World War I. I was greatly impressed, thinking, "With the love to love enemies, we could have true peace between men, and between countries."

In any case I decided to become a Christian, went to the Church for the first time in my life on February 3, 1916, listened to a sermon about Christianity for the first time, and was baptized by the pastor of the Methodist Church at that time, Rev. Johnson. Since then, every night after work, I walked a few miles to the church in Vacaville. With the progress of my earnest study of the Bible, I realized how sinful I had been, having been conceited of my being a model youth, and of my well-behaviors, having been thinking that God would have protected me even if I hadn't prayed as long as I had been living right.

Like Paul said, I couldn't help shouting that I had been the head of sinners. The Bible says that there is nobody that's right and that it is a sin not to do the thing which he knows is right and that it is also a sin not to do a thing without faith. If my mind could be reflected in the mirror of the God's words, how ugly it would be. Looking back upon the nearly 60 years of my religious life, thinking that the Lord has encouraged and led me until today, I am now

filled with inspiration, happiness, and hope.

Q: We are going to translate this into English, but as you mentioned, we'll change the name into the others.

A: Some told me that my confessions are sad complaints, but the person only talked boasting accounts of his own experiences like what he did--how many hundreds of people he preached to. He is deceased. He skipped to talk on Christianity, and talked about himself only. He said that mine was sad complaints, because I talked about hardships while he only talked about happy things. When I saw this, I thought it wasn't too good. ~~He doesn't know we need a hope through hardships~~ in our life, so hardships are also necessary for us. I went through so many difficulties in my life, bringing up my children. Some say that we don't have to care about children. But I wanted my children to be fine persons with religious faith as Christians. Society stood against me, and I had to fight for my children. Then I was put in the Camp, and stayed there for 3 years or so although I went out of the Camp to work soon. I came back to the Camp when winter came. I also stayed there for a little while when the war ended. A siren was sounded for a long long time. People said, "Japan won! Japan won!" I thought, "What are they saying?" They didn't know the truth. I had come back to the camp from Chicago, the outside of the Camp, after seeing that the atomic bombs were dropped and Japan surrendered. It was the siren that was telling that Japan had surrendered and that the war had ended, but the people got together to celebrate Japan's winning the war with a Kashira-tsuki fish (fish with head--used for happy occasions to celebrate) and Azuki-meshi (red bean rice--used for new celebration). ~~It was a comic, since they didn't~~ know the truth. I couldn't say anything in the Camp, because if I had said something, my children would have been treated bad, being told, "Hikoku-min" (an unpatriotic person, a traitor) or "You are not a Japanese."

Q: ~~It was absurd, wasn't it?~~ it?

A: Yes, it was, because they didn't go out of the Camp, and didn't know the reality. They were

playing "Go" or "Shogi" in the Camp, or chatting instead, and didn't know anything happening outside the world like frogs in a pond thinking the pond the big sea. I think I am glad that I came to America. If I stayed in Japan... When I visited Japan, this was before the typhoon came, I saw nobody wearing shoes. Everybody was wearing geta or Zohri while he was wearing western suits. They weren't wearing a hat, either. When I saw this, I thought it wasn't too good. Although they invented various new things, started to drive more cars, and imported various things, but they tend to forget the real spirit. They can't work in the society with geta on, they have to wear shoes. I thought this represented the spirit of Japan. Wherever I visited in Japan, I found the place really dirty and messy. I heard that three people had been killed at the train station. They were pushed by the people who tried to get on the train that was coming in the station, and fell down to the railroads where the train was coming. This happened at a few places while I was in Japan. It was absurd to push the people like that. I would like to visit Japan again, but I don't feel like going after seeing these things. They scramble for seats in the train. Once I went to see a movie in Japan. Although the theater was full, they made room for me and I saw the movie. Under the seats, there were so full of empty bottles, cans, and wasted papers that I couldn't find the room to place my feet. You seldom see this here in America. This was a big theater in Ginza, Tokyo.

Q: Public etiquettes...

A: Also rest rooms were so dirty that I couldn't go there. They seemed not to separate the women's rest room from the men's. Women didn't hesitate at all to enter the men's room to use it. So was the public bath. They didn't hesitate to use the men's bath when not so many men were using it. The parks were full of waste papers. There is a park called Oka Park at the foot of the Wakayama Castle, and I used to go there when I was young, calling it my park. In the park, they had gold fish, and carp. It was a beautiful place. When I visited the park 15 years ago, it was filled with wasted papers, and there were no carp or anything any more. In this point, Japan was still immature, 12 years old in its spirit. It hadn't become an adult yet.

Q: Thank you very much for giving me such good stories.